

about one mile in length, he found the banks on the north side high with coal occasionally, and the country fine on all sides, but the want of wood and the scarcity of game up the river, induced us to decide on fixing ourselves lower down during the winter. In the evening our men danced among themselves to the great amusement of the Indians.

Mandan's Speech. "Wednesday, 31st. A second chief arrived this morning with an invitation from the grand chief of the Mandans, to come to his village where he wished to present some corn to us and speak with us. Captain Clarke walked down to his village. He was first seated with great ceremony on a robe by the side of the chief, who then threw over his shoulders another robe handsomely ornamented. The pipe was then smoked with several of the old men who were seated around the chief. After some time he began his discourse by observing that he believe what we had told him, and that they should soon enjoy peace, which would gratify him as well as his people, because they could then hunt without fear of being attacked, and the women might work in the fields without looking every moment for the enemy, and at night put off their moccasins, a phrase by which is conveyed the idea of security, when the women could undress at night without fear of attack.

"As to the Ricaras, he continued, in order to show you that we wish peace with all men, that chief, pointing to his second chief, will go with some warriors back to the Ricaras with their chief now here and smoke with that nation. When we heard of your coming, all the nations around returned from their hunting to see you, in hopes of receiving large presents. All were disappointed and some discontented. For his part he was not much so, though his village was. He added that he would go and see his great father, the president. Two of the steel traps stolen from the Frenchman were then laid before Captain Clarke, and the women brought about twelve bushels of corn. After the chief had finished, Captain Clarke made an answer to the speech and then he returned to the boat, where he found the chief of the third village and Kagohami (the Little Raven) who smoked and talked about half an hour. After they left the boat the grand chief of the Mandans came dressed in the clothes we had given him, with

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621 leaders of the hierarchy of older men; they were expected to
622 co-operate for the general welfare of the village. They were en-
623 titled to wear a headdress of buffalo horns and ermine during
council meetings, on various social occasions, and during peace-
making discussions with neighboring tribes.

622 The Mandan informants thought that sons of chiefs were
usually selected, since they were better trained and were ex-
posed to sacred bundles which had proved their potency. From
a study of Mandan lineages it was not possible to establish the
accuracy of this opinion, since all lineages having chiefs except
that of Four Bears were broken by the smallpox. In this lineage
there was the following inheritance of chiefs: Good Boy was
chief at Slant Village after the first smallpox epidemic and lived
at Fort Clark for nine years as first chief, where he died; Four
Bears, son of Good Boy, was chief for a number of years prior
to 1837, when he died of smallpox; Bad Gun, son of Four Bears,
was selected after he had sold his rights in the Black Mouth
Society. The Mandan claim that Bad Gun was not a strong
chief and attribute his selection to the fact that he was the son
of Four Bears. Because he had acquired his father's sacred
bundles which had brought Four Bears unique success in many
war expeditions, the people thought he would be lucky.

The Mandan endeavored to select two men for chiefs whose
interests were complementary. They felt that one chief should
be an individual gifted in warfare and capable of repelling the
enemy from the immediate environment of the village. The
other, it was felt, should be one who had at heart the interest of
the people in their daily activities around the village. He should
be one who was thoughtful of others, gave frequent feasts, was
popular with the tribes coming to the village to trade, and was
able to settle little quarrels within the village or with visiting
tribes. It was also felt that the two head chiefs should be of
opposite moieties.

622 A chief had little or no authority apart from the council of
537 which he was a member. His principal authority was derived
from his ability as an orator to persuade the council of older
men to sanction his opinions. A chief was, first of all, an orator
who in council, after enumerating his various accomplishments

5. A sacred robe decorated with the rainbow and used in rainmaking rites.

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to demonstrate the extent to which he had worked for the welfare of the entire village, then offered an opinion as to the wisdom of a certain act or policy. He was never demoted, the Mandan claimed; others younger who had been distinguishing themselves merely replaced the older man in public esteem. A chief's greatness was based on the length of time that his opinions were accepted to the exclusion of all others' opinions. A chief was expected to conform strictly to village and tribal custom.

The day-by-day and calendar round of economic, social, and ceremonial activities were rigidly regulated by tradition. In matters relative to gardening, the Corn Bundle leaders, Goose Society, and females of the various households set their own rules. When public sanction was given a young man by one or more members of the council of older men to perform a certain ceremony and he had made public announcement from a rooftop that he would perform the ceremony, a time was reserved for the ceremony, and the Black Mouths would have prevented any interference. The Mandan believed that quarrels should not arise over schedules for performance of the various ceremonies. The fact is that the Mandan liked to attend ceremonies and believed that bad luck would come to anyone who deviated from the normal pattern of behavior.

The responsibilities for leadership in various Mandan social and ceremonial activities were profusely scattered through the entire population. A person who would be the leader in one activity became a subordinate member of another activity in which he was expected to follow the leader's directions. For instance, when the time arrived for the performance of the Okipa ceremony, the entire population was organized around the officers for that ceremony, while the Black Mouth Society enforced the rules. It is highly improbable that the Black Mouths received any formal instruction. Custom defined the rules of behavior during the Okipa which were known by all except very young children. It was also customary when the enemy were not especially troublesome for the greater part of a village group to leave for a short time to trap eagles. The village would break up into a dozen or more camps, each of which was under the leadership of a male having an eagle-trapping bundle. Regardless of a man's status during other activities, he was subordinate to the

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526 regular archery contests in which each competitor paid an entrance fee; the object was to see which man could get the most arrows into the air at once.¹

The women played a game with a large leather ball, ornamented and well made, which they caused to fall alternately on the foot and knee by bouncing. There was also a children's game, called Assé, played with the tip of an antler to the base of which two feathers were attached. The children also played a game with a hoop covered with a number of leather bands, and about a foot in diameter. This hoop was rolled along and they hit it and knocked it down by throwing a pointed stick; the one that struck nearest the center won. In the spring after the break-up, the children used to run along the bank and throw this ring into the water.² Catlin also gives an account of sham battles under the leadership of older men in which the boys engaged.

533 MISCELLANEOUS:—As to the other features of their culture perhaps a few words from Maximilian³ will give some idea.

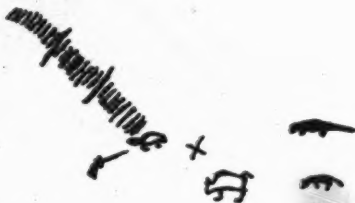
He says:—"Many of them take a real pleasure in music and painting and are very skillful in both. . . . Their musical instruments are simple. The songs consist of cries uttered from time to time, and broken by louder bursts of joy. These are accompanied by heavy drum blows and the sound of rattles. . . . They discussed with pleasure subjects of the highest order, the universe and its cause together with kindred topics, saying that their own explanation was far from satisfactory. . . . They are very fine orators, and use very impressive figurative language. They like to talk. . . . By nature they are proud and full of ambition. . . . They often are highly sensitive, and some have 156 been known to die of love or from wounded personal pride due to an insult to their honor."

538 Maximilian also says that they were good story tellers and took great pleasure in relating their myths and legends. They had a sort of literature in the shape of rituals for their elaborate dances, and these were handed down through the medicine men.

805 They paid considerable attention to the stars in their ceremonies but were not students of the heavens, and their calendar was a

¹ Op. cit., vol. I, p. 141.² Maximilian: p. 417.³ Ibid., pp. 404 et seq.

532 instead of writing; for instance, the figures on their robes, the drawing of Mato-Topé (Plate
212 XXII.), and the subjoined Indian letter from a Mandan to a fur trader:



212 The following is the explanation of the hieroglyphic figures contained in it:

437 The cross signifies, "I will barter, or trade." Three animals are drawn on the right hand of the cross: one is a buffalo; the two others, a weasel (*Mustela Canadensis*), and an otter. The writer offers, in exchange for the skins of these animals (probably meaning that of a white buffalo), the articles which he has drawn on the left side of the cross.

He has, in the first place, depicted a beaver very plainly, behind which there is a gun; to the left of the beaver are thirty strokes, each ten separated by a longer line; this means, I will give thirty beaver skins and a gun for the skins of the three animals on the right hand of the cross.

821 Many of them dispute, with great earnestness, on more elevated subjects; thus, they inquired our ideas of the various heavenly bodies, and of the origin of the universe, as they, themselves, declare their own silly traditions to be insufficient. Some, indeed, thought our ideas on these subjects much more silly than their own. They laughed outright, when we affirmed that the earth was round, and revolved about the sun. Others, however, would not reject our views, and were of opinion that, as the Whites could do so much which was incomprehensible to them, it was possible they might be right on this point also.

537 In all works that treat of these remarkable people, we find recorded very energetic and well-digested speeches of their chiefs. They frequently use very appropriate figures, and often said fitter truths to their white oppressors. Dr. Morse quotes some such phrases, used at the conclusion of treaties of peace, or declarations of war, which express much in a few words. Thus, in declarations of war: "The blood of our wives and children smokes on the ground! The bones of our warriors and old men are uncovered, and whiten the earth! The tomahawk is raised!" And on the conclusion of peace: "The bones of our warriors are buried! the tomahawk is buried! the blood of our women and children is covered! The path which leads to them must be kept clean; no weeds may grow there. The chain which binds us together must not become rusty." Or, on the contrary: "The chain begins to rust," &c. &c..